

VOLUTA MITRA LINNAEUS, 1758, VS. *VOLUTA EPISCOPALIS*
LINNAEUS, 1758 (MOLLUSCA: GASTROPODA): PROPOSED USE OF
PLENARY POWERS. Z.N.(S.) 1728

By Eugene Coan (Dept. of Biol. Sci., Stanford Univ., Stanford, Calif., U.S.A.)

The purpose of this petition is to forestall confusion caused by an inconsistency in the way Linnaeus cited two molluscan names.

(1) In 1758 (p. 732-733), the following entries appear under the genus *Voluta*:

Mitra. V. testa fusiformi laevi, labro denticulato.

episcopal. 368. Bonan. recr. 3. f. 120.

Rumph. mus. t. 29. f. K.

Gvalt. test. t. 53. f. G.

Argenv. conch. t. 12. f. C.

Kratzenst. Regenf. 12. t. 5. f. 33.

papilis. 369. List. conch. t. 839. f. 67. Buccinum dentatum.

Bonan. recr. 3. t. 119. Turbo Thiara.

Rumph. mus. t. 29. f. I.

Gvalt. test. t. 53. f. I.

Argenv. conch. t. 12. f. E.

Kratzenst. Regenf. t. 1. f. 1.

Habitat in O. Asjatico.

The term *Voluta mitra* appears in the same type face as is used for the rest of the specific names in the genus, but it is not followed by a number, as was Linnaeus' usual custom. On the next line, the name *V. episcopal* appears with a number, as does the name *V. papilis* below it, both in a type face elsewhere reserved for varieties. Five of the six references given for the latter name are from the same works as the five appearing for the name *V. episcopal*, but different figures are cited.

(2) In the 12th edition (1767 : 1193-1194), the nominal species *Voluta mitra* was given a number, *V. episcopal* was left without a number, and *V. papilis* was numbered. The description following the name *V. mitra* was somewhat expanded, and the references under the name *V. papilis* were increased to seven; other minor changes were made, of no significance to the present question.

(3) Two morphologic taxa are involved here, both being well-known and clearly distinct from one another. Dodge (1955, *Bull. Amer. Mus. nat. Hist.* 107 [1] : 121-123) pointed out that the numerous references cited by Linnaeus (1758) are correct, except that the Regenfuss reference under the name *V. episcopal* should read "t. 3" instead of "t. 5". Dodge also stated that Linnaeus (1764, *Mus. Ulricae*) discussed this complex under the name *Voluta mitra* only, and that his description indicated that he regarded the other two names as varieties. The specimens in the Queen's Museum at Uppsala labelled "*V. mitra*" are two specimens of the *V. episcopal* of authors, two of the *V. papilis* of authors, and one of *Mitra pontificalis* Lamarck, 1811, a related but distinct species (Dodge, 1955).

(4) Most authors have abandoned the nominal species *Voluta mitra*, and have treated the names *V. episcopal* and *V. papilis* as full species. As ex-

amples, one would cite Gmelin (1791, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 13) : 3459), Röding (1798, *Mus. Boltenianum* : 135, 136), Lamarck (1811, *Ann. Mus. nat. Hist.*, Paris 17 : 197), Swainson (1831, *Zool. Illust.* 5), Kiener (1838, *Spec. Icon.* 3 : 3, 8), Küster (1841, *Conch. Icon.* 2 : pls. 1, 2), Sowerby (1880, *Thes. Conch.* 4 : 2), and Tryon (1882, *Man. Conch.* 4 : 111).

Both species are members of the genus *Mitra* Lamarck, 1798 (*Tabl. Ency. Méth.* : pls. 369–377), ex Martyn MS. It is a genus without nominal species, the “original list” having been provided by Röding (1798 : 135–138). *Voluta episcopalis* is the type-species by the subsequent designation of Montfort (1810, *Conch. Syst.* 2 : 543).

Dautzenberg and Bouge (1922, *Jour. Conchyl.* 87 : 88–91), however, revived the nominal species *Voluta mitra* for the *V. episcopalis* of authors and credited the nominal species *V. papalis* to a later author. In 1933 (*Jour. Conchyl.* 77 : 177), the same two authors adopted a different style of citation, listing the two forms as *Mitra mitra-episcopalis* and *Mitra mitra-papalis*, crediting both to Linnaeus, 1758.

Dodge (1955) suggested that the nominal species *Voluta mitra* be adopted for the first of the two forms and that the second be called *V. papalis*. This plan, according to Dodge, would be a compromise consistent with what Linnaeus evidently intended. He also stated that, “The description of *mitra* in the ‘Systema,’ . . . is worded so as to cover only the *episcopalis* of authors, and this is, I suggest, the most convincing reason for adopting *mitra* as the specific name of that shell.” However, the description would seem to be broad enough to cover both of the two forms.

(5) In the interests of stability and in order to be consistent with the bulk of the molluscan literature, I hereby request the Commission to take either of the following two possible courses of action:

Alternative (A)

(a) to use its plenary powers:

- (i) to suppress all previous revisions of the *Voluta mitra* complex of three species-group names;
 - (ii) to declare the nominal species *Voluta mitra* Linnaeus, 1758, to be a junior objective synonym of the nominal species *Voluta episcopalis* Linnaeus, 1758;
- (b) to place the following specific names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology: *Voluta episcopalis* Linnaeus, 1758 (defined by the same list of bibliographical citations as its junior objective synonym *Voluta mitra* Linnaeus, 1758) and *Voluta papalis* Linnaeus, 1758 (defined by its own list of bibliographical citations).

Alternative (B)

- (a) to use its plenary powers to suppress for purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy the name *Voluta mitra* Linnaeus, 1758, on the grounds that it is a *nomen dubium*;
- (b) to place the names *Voluta episcopalis* Linnaeus, 1758, and *Voluta papalis* Linnaeus, 1758, on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (c) to place the name suppressed under (a) above on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology.